



*Linkages to Learning, a Collaborative School-based Partnership among the Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services, Montgomery County Public Schools, Public and Nonprofit Agencies, Families and Communities*

### Summer Reading Fun

This summer, Linkages to Literacy (formerly "Linkages to the Library") was held at thirteen schools and eight branches of Montgomery County Public Libraries, joining together 670 children, parents and volunteer "reading buddies" in fun-filled family literacy activities. With funding from



**Reading Buddy helps younger student at Long Branch Library at Broad Acres ES**

COMCAST and the in-kind support of Friends of the Library, Linkages to Learning, Montgomery County Public Libraries and Montgomery County Public Schools, the program emphasized family reading and exposure to community resources to enhance reading, especially helping parents to become familiar with resources at their local library. Librarians and school staff shared tips with parents so they can help their children grow as readers.

Creative programming included presentations by local authors and performers as well as public safety and health professionals. There were also educational activities, like book-making, computer and reading games. Children also "cuddled" their books at pajama parties, teddy-bear picnics and at camp-fire and quilting nights.

Many of Linkages families lack the financial resources to purchase their own books, yet the number of books in the family home is a well-known predictor of school success. So helping Linkages families become regular visitors and borrowers at their public library is a program goal, along with supporting families as they begin to establish their own collection of children's literature.

First Book, Heart of America, community members and the summer book-drive organized by COMCAST, the Libraries and Barnes and Noble made it possible to distribute thousands of books to children at 23 Linkages schools each year. Craig Snedeker, vice president and general manager of Comcast of Montgomery, observes "The books we give to program participants help them stay excited about reading, long after the Linkages program is over."

### Linkages to Literacy 2004 Schools and Libraries

Maryvale ES & Twinbrook Library  
Broad Acres Elementary & Long Branch Library  
Summit Hall ES & Gaithersburg Library  
Greencastle ES & Fairland Library  
Harmony Hills ES and Parkland MS & Aspen Hill Library  
Highland ES & Wheaton Library  
Viers Mill ES & Kensington Park Library  
New Hampshire Estates ES, Oak View ES  
and Montgomery Knolls ES & the Silver Spring Library  
Eastern MS and Silver Spring International MS & Silver Spring Library

The program seems to be producing positive results. By the end of the program, 87% of parents reported that they were reading regularly with their children, and 91% of parents reported their children were regularly reading independently.



**Children's Librarian Judy Furash with Silver Spring Library tells a story using a flannel-board with New Hampshire Estates ES & Oak View ES children**

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## Local Author Lulu Delacre Delights Families



*Lulu Delacre autographs books for families*

Families at Highland E.S., Silver Spring International M.S. and Eastern M.S. enjoyed a special connection with Silver Spring author Lulu Delacre. Delacre, award-winning author and artist, has written and illustrated nine books, including *Golden Tales: Myths, Legends and Folktales from Latin America* and *Salsa Stories*. Hundreds of copies of these books were given to Linkages families this summer through our partnership with First Book.

Born in Puerto Rico and raised by Argentinian parents and a Uruguayan grandmother, Delacre is able to vividly portray Latino cultures. Reading her brightly illustrated books is a multi-sensory experience—one can almost feel the fabric of the mother's shawl, inhale the delicious smells from her kitchen and hear the laughter of her children.

Having lived in many countries throughout the world before settling in the Washington area, Delacre views her books as providing children with an opportunity to hang on to their parents' heritage while growing new wings. She has said, "I feel very strongly that as we Latinas raise our children in the U.S. between two cultures, we must keep our traditions and folklore alive and pass them on to our young. It is the way to give children roots, especially as they learn to cherish the language and culture of the USA."

Patricia Acevado, a parent at Eastern M.S., participated in three sessions that revolved around Delacre's work and culminated in a meet-the-author book talk plus a trip to the Silver Spring Library.

Acevado recalls, "We had the opportunity to meet the author. Lulu told us about her experiences and her motivation to write her book. She wanted to tell stories to her daughters, native stories about her country, but she couldn't find anything here, nothing written, that told these stories she loved so much. So that motivated her to write, and she found she could do it easily, because she knew these stories so well from her own childhood."

Acevado notes that the summer program was helpful in connecting her and her daughter to new people in the community. "My own daughter is twelve. We just moved from Colombia. We have library cards. During the summer, every day we went to the library, and now we are still going on Saturdays."

This experience, meeting Lulu, has been the most valuable one we've had since we came here. My daughter loves literature. At night, she doesn't want to go to bed, she just wants to read and read," concludes Acevado.

Eastern M.S. parent Maria Membreno, originally from El Salvador, said, "Sra. Lulu inspired my daughter too. She's also twelve and just loves art."

"She drew a cover like Sra. Lulu's book. Sra. Lulu told us that you don't need a lot of stuff to write a book. You can write about simple things that you know. So my daughter, she is drawing her own characters, making her own stories. She is thinking like a writer."

Marlene Woods, Linkages site coordinator at Eastern M.S. and a newly-minted U.S. citizen, points out that although Delacre's stories were from several countries, they share traditional Latino values, for example, respect for parents.

*"This experience, meeting Lulu, has been the most valuable one we've had since we came here. My daughter loves literature. At night, she doesn't want to go to bed, she just wants to read and read"*

Patricia Acevado, Eastern MS parent

Recalls Woods, "In one story, the daughter disobeys her mother. She is very fresh and slaps her mother and then she finds that her hand is forever stuck on her mother's cheek." While parents talked with their children about this funny story and shared why respect is an important value to them, Woods shared hand-shaped stickers with parents and children to place on their cheeks.



*Linkages site coordinators Marlene Woods and Conor Harmon join author Lulu Delacre, volunteer Belkis Calaveras and Analilia Solis, mental health counselor*

## AmeriCorps Members Strengthen Linkages Volunteer Services

This year, Linkages to Learning is lucky to be a part of AmeriCorps Project Change, a collaboration of education and social service agencies in Montgomery County who share a common mission of improving the quality of life for county residents.

AmeriCorps Project Change is part of the national network of AmeriCorps service programs that engage more than 50,000 Americans each year to meet critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. Linkages AmeriCorps members Ian Harding and Emily Button have rolled-up their sleeves to teach Adult ESL classes, lead after-school homework and enrichment clubs, support computer classes for students and adults, recruit volunteer and provide other needed program support.

Paul Scott, MCPS representative on the Linkages Resource Team, observes that these AmeriCorps members truly make a difference in the quality of services provided at Linkages' 23 schools. "Linkages staff are engaged with the mental health counseling and case management needs of our families. Working with many partners, they tailor a broad variety of prevention programs to address community concerns.

But staffing these efforts, which rely heavily upon the recruitment and engagement of volunteers, is quite a challenge. That's why our AmeriCorps members are so valuable," said Scott. "They can step in to fill the gaps and maximize our resources. They have a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for this work, and their optimism and high energy allows them to 'get things done.' "

Linkages AmeriCorps member Emily Button notes that she was attracted to Linkages because it provides exposure to a variety of professional disciplines, along with opportunities to work interactively in the community. "I'm learning organizational skills, people skills, classroom management skills, and leadership skills."

Button decided upon AmeriCorps because "the opportunity to do meaningful work while earning scholarship money for school was very attractive. I could have waitressed, but that would be far less exciting and less conducive to my professional development goals."



## Linkages at Greencastle Hosts Mothers Empowerment Expo

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, dozens of parents joined with school community members at Greencastle ES for Linkages' first Mothers Empowerment Expo: *"Motherhood Isn't a Job, It's a Way of Life!"* Local author Marjorie Nightingale delivered the keynote address, sharing humorous excerpts from her book, *"Help Me Before I Go Crazy: Adventures From a Working Mother's Life."*

Nicki Sanders, Linkages to Learning site coordinator at Greencastle ES and Banneker MS, developed the program with the goal of bringing resources directly to parents using a fun-filled "fair" format." According to Ilene Sparber, a program manager with Linkages to Learning, "Nicki has responded to the needs expressed by our Burtonsville area parents, focusing on expanding resources to improve family self-sufficiency."

"Sparber observes, "This Expo is based on Nicki's four and a half years of experience with the community. And her approach empowers parents by building skills and networks of support." Additionally, the Wednesday Morning Mothers' Group, the annual Career Fair and the new Parenting and Employment Lending Library are examples of the Linkages team's creative programs that tap into the surrounding community's well of support.

Special thanks to participants and donors who supported the Expo and helped make it a success in its first year:

**Marjorie Nightingale, Amy Goldberg and The Runaround, Leticia Barr of The Body Shop at Home, The Burtonsville Eye Care Center, Concerned Medical and Health Professionals, Consumer Credit Counseling Services of Greater Washington, Educational Opportunity Center, Holy Cross Hospital, Montgomery County Public Libraries Fairland Regional Branch, Howard University Continuing Education, Juliet Lawrence of Juliet's Basket of Gifts, the League of Women Voters of Montgomery County, Inc., Monica Werner of Mabco - the Purse Party People, Montgomery County Housing Partnership, Party Life Gifts, Inc., Parker Memorial Baptist Church/Employment Ministry, Primary Care Coalition, Ra Re Does Rooms, SHARE Food Network, Special Care Wellness Day Spa, State Farm Insurance Companies, Warm Spirit, WISER (Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement), Zipin and Melehy, LLC., Cheryl Smith Mims of Southern Pound Cakes by Cheryl, Montgomery County Government Eastern Regional Services Center, Montgomery County Police Department/Crime Prevention, Montgomery County Dept. of Health and Human Services (DHHS)/Early Childhood Services and the Montgomery County DHHS Victim's Assistance and Sexual Assault Program. We want to recognize the extraordinary efforts of Linkages staff, Nicki Sanders and Kelly Sicard-Jackson, and the Silver Spring YMCA Youth Services.**



## Thanks to our Donors, Volunteers and Partners



- Colburn Family Foundation, for donating hundreds of tickets this season to D.C. United games
- Pepco, for donating 15 tickets families to a D.C. United game
- K12 Group of Bethesda, for donating 8 boxes of school supplies to Linkages families
- PTAs at Potomac ES, Wood Acres ES & Travilah ES, for "adopting" sister schools at Highland, OakView ES/New Hampshire Estates ES and Summit Hall ES, and donating school supplies through K12 Group
- John Ahern and Mattress Warehouse, for donating beds to a family at Maryvale ES
- Andrew Pelish of Chevy Chase, for donating 900 children's books collected at his Bar Mitzvah
- Lorraine Trexlor, for donating new coats, hats, mittens, stuffed animals as well as school supplies and backpacks
- Colleen Noland and The Heart of America, for donating more than 600 children's books through Books for the Heart
- Westland MS PTA, for donating school supplies
- Karen King and family of Silver Spring, for donating dozens of children's books and toys
- Erin Ryan and The Olney-Belmont MOMS Club, for donating 50 duffel bags and school supplies
- Christine Dallaire of Chevy Chase, for donating three strollers and notebooks
- Tim and Moriarity of Arlington Virginia, for donating a crib to a Rolling Terrace family, and to Bridget Hartman, for its delivering
- Temple Beth Ami in Rockville, for donating children's toys, books and school supplies
- Liz Feldman and family, for donating 191 children's books
- Carol Hynes Assman, Susie Berlin, Kathy Strom and the Junior Womans Club of Chevy Chase, for donating children's audiocassettes, videos, and computer games
- Helping Hands of Rockville Senior Center, for donating dozens of hand-crafted knitted items
- Marcie Lovett of Olney, for donating school supplies, toiletries, books, toys and clothing



**Tim Levy of K12 Group delivers school supplies to Linkages to Learning**

- Jennifer Fairfax of Silver Spring and family, for donating a baby swing, saucer, and bath
- Richard DeBona and congregants of the Church of Our Lady of Mercy in Potomac, for sponsoring a Linkages Mother's Empowerment Retreat at Rising Phoenix
- Linnea Carlson and St. Andrew's Lutheran Church, for donating school supplies to 75 Kennedy Cluster students
- Our Lady of Grace and St. Andrew's Catholic Churches and Leisure World's Interfaith Chapel, for generous donations to the Kennedy Cluster's Thanksgiving holiday giving project
- Angel Martinez, Jose Otero, Leon Reed, Doug Schuessler and MSI volunteers, for sponsoring MSI Community Soccer, serving several hundred students at Broad Acres ES and Highland ES, and for initiating community soccer at Rolling Terrace ES
- Learnshop, for donating recycled school supplies to a number of Linkages sites
- Travilah ES PTA, for donating \$1,162 to Linkages at Summit Hall ES
  - The Summit Hall Student Council Association, for donations to Linkages food pantry
  - The Episcopal Church of Ascension in Gaithersburg, for donating 80 backpacks and school supplies to Summit Hall ES families
  - Costco Wholesale, for donating 450 backpacks and \$450 worth of school supplies to Summit Hall ES families
  - Summit Hall staff and community donors, for donating clothing, furniture & computers
  - Community members, students and Frontier Tax Solutions employees, for volunteering as Linkages to Literacy reading buddies at Summit Hall ES
- Jacqueline Roca and Xiomara Pacheco, for volunteering as instructors in the Summit Hall ES computer class
- Renne Chen, for donating toys, jackets and clothes to Highland ES children



## Thanks to our Donors, Volunteers and Partners



- Donna Gregory and Meagan Lane and "crew," for volunteering with the Linkages to Literacy at Pine Crest ES and Montgomery Knolls ES
- Amy Celtnieks, for donating six boxes of composition notebooks to families at Pine Crest ES & Montgomery Knolls ES
- Alison Hoffman, volunteer, for organizing the collection and distribution of school supplies to families at Pine Crest ES & Montgomery Knolls ES
- Friends of Alison and Mike Hoffman, for donating school supplies to 100 families at Pine Crest ES & Montgomery Knolls ES
- Mrs. Otumba, for donating clothing to families at Montgomery Knolls ES
- Neediest Kids, for donating eleven pairs of shoes to children at Montgomery Knolls ES and Pine Crest ES
- Mr. & Mrs. Michael Gordon, for donating a credenza, bookcase, desk and chair and microwave to Linkages at Rolling Terrace ES
- The law firm of Michael Gordon, for donating furniture to Linkages at Maryvale ES
- Our Lady of Visitation Church in Darnestown, for sponsoring three Maryvale ES families with donations of school supplies, clothing, food and more
- The Rockville Jaycees, for donating school supplies to 15 students at Maryvale ES
- St. Matthew Presbyterian Church, for donating \$400 to meet emergency needs of Harmony Hills ES families
- Gerrie Beck, for donating household items to Harmony Hills ES families
- Beth Berman, for donating clothing and household items to Harmony Hills ES families
- John & Ruth Kean, for donating \$100 to meet emergency needs of Harmony Hills ES families
- Gordon Brumback, for donating refrigerator to a Harmony Hills ES family
- Farmland PTA, for donating school supplies to Harmony Hills ES families
- Susan Schwartz, staff at Viers Mill ES, for donating a computer to a family
- American Legion Post 86, for sponsoring a Halloween party for Maryvale ES students

- Holiday Park Senior Center, for donating school supplies to Viers Mill ES families
- St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Rockville, for donating clothing to Viers Mill ES families
- Bright Eyes Daycare Center, for donating cereal boxes to Viers Mill ES families
- Parkland PTA, for donating \$200 towards school supplies Parkland MS families
- Millian Memorial United Methodist Church, for donating three bags of school supplies to Parkland MS families
- Lion's Club, for donating \$300 in grocery store gift certificates to 12 Parkland MS families
- Congregants of Temple Micah in Washington D.C., for donating furniture and clothing to Highland E.S. families
- Wheaton Presbyterian Church, for collecting and donating school supplies to Highland ES families
- The Tzu Chi Foundation, for donating schools supplies to 30 Silver Spring International MS children as well as 30 backpacks full of school supplies
- Mrs. Vanderhorst of Silver Spring International MS PTA, for donating 4 backpacks and school supplies to Silver Spring International MS families
- Tzu Chi Foundation, for donating 30 backpacks with school supplies to Eastern MS families
- Ann Roldan, teacher at Eastern MS, for donating household items to Eastern MS families
- Jennifer King and Liberty Grove Methodist Church in Burtonsville, for donating dozens of backpacks and school supplies to Greencastle ES & Banneker MS families
- Alfreda Johnson and Allen Chapel AME Church in Burtonsville, for donating dozens of backpacks and school supplies to Greencastle ES & Banneker MS families
- Kia Felder and Parker Memorial Baptist Church in Burtonsville, for donating dozens of backpacks and school supplies to Greencastle ES & Banneker MS families
- Joyce Thompson and Cedar Community Church of Spencerville, for donating books for a Parent Resource Center at Greencastle ES



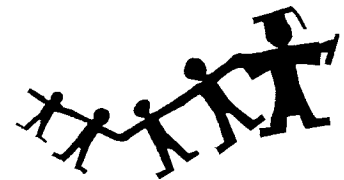
The "W.E. CARE" team of Wyngate ES joins with Office Depot in Rockville to support Linkages' school supply drive

## A Warm Welcome to our New Site-based Staff and Interns:

*Andrea Barrera*, site coordinator & case manager, Silver Spring International MS  
*Michelle Blumenthal*, site coordinator & case manager, Highland ES  
*Emily Button*, AmeriCorps member  
*Grace Campbell*, case manager, New Hampshire Estates ES & Oakview ES  
*Maria Cedena*, case manager, Washington Grove ES  
*Nicole Dubois*, mental health counselor, Washington Grove ES  
*Laila El-Asmer*, mental health counselor, Greencastle ES & Banneker MS  
*Julie Faden*, mental health counselor, Parkland MS  
*Ian Harding*, AmeriCorps member  
*Chrissie Herman*, school nurse, Harmony Hills ES  
*Louise Jackson*, school health room assistant, Harmony Hills ES

*Debra Klarfeld*, mental health counselor, Harmony Hills ES  
*Michelle Shay*, clinical director, GUIDE Youth Services  
*Cheryl Reidy*, nurse manager, School-Based Health Centers  
*Anallia Solis*, mental health counselor, Montgomery Knolls & Pine Crest ES  
*Elena Aguirre*, Broad Acres ES, social work intern, University of Maryland, Baltimore County  
*Jessica Cardwell*, Broad Acres ES, graduate psychology intern, George Washington University  
*Erica Craig*, Highland ES, graduate social work intern, University of Maryland, Baltimore County  
*Emily Neff*, Broad Acres ES, graduate psychology intern, George Washington University

*Elena Padua*, Summit Hall ES, graduate social work intern, Catholic University of America  
*Lena Rose*, Highland ES, graduate social work intern, University of Maryland, Baltimore County  
*Norca Salas*, Broad Acres ES, graduate social work intern, University of Maryland, Baltimore County  
*KimXuyen Vo*, Broad Acres ES, social work intern, University of Maryland, Baltimore County



## ...and a Fond Farewell to our Former Colleagues:

*Conrad Dennis*, site coordinator, Highland ES  
*Shannon Flannery*, mental health counselor, Parkland MS  
*Conor Harmon*, site coordinator, Silver Spring Internat'l MS  
*Maty Navarro*, case manager, Harmony Hills ES & Parkland MS

*Valina Rogers-Scotland*, mental health counselor, New Hampshire Estates ES/Oakview ES  
*Terrence Snellings*, mental health counselor, Highland ES  
*Neysa Younger*, case manager, Broad Acres ES

## Flying Colors for Linkages School-Based Health Centers

Last spring, Linkages' School-Based Health Centers underwent a Department of Health and Human Services Community Review to assess how well its services are supporting County residents in becoming safe, healthy and self-sufficient.

Program staff completed questionnaires focused on the Centers' outcomes and customer services. The review board, which included community members, observed the program to identify strengths and weaknesses in services and interviewed staff and customers to determine program quality.

According to School Health Services' Joan Glick, R.N., C.P.N.P. and nurse administrator, the process of preparing for the review was complex, yet worthwhile. "The soup-to-nuts examination of our program, which looked at program data, clinical services, partnerships and more, helped us to appreciate what we've done well, but it also provides us with an opportunity to consider what we can do better," said Glick, an early school-based health center (SBHC) pioneer who served as the Center's first nurse practitioner.

In the report, reviewers Jerry Floyd, Tom Hickman and Sidney Schiller noted that the School Based Health Center's program "is to be highly commended for providing preventative and/or acute health care services to enrolled children to reduce barriers to health care and learning to foster healthy life style behaviors."

The review said that "the SBHC provides a high level of health care to children whose needs would go unattended because they are uninsured or face numerous barriers to receiving care even when families have insurance."

Such obstacles, according to the review, "include families lacking in transportation, working parents who are unavailable, intimidation of health care system and procedures as well as language barriers." The report further states "The staff is highly motivated and dedicated to achieving meritorious outcomes. Care of children and their families is of primary concern."



# SHARE THE HOLIDAYS

## with Linkages Children and Families!

*Donate:*

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Holiday Food Boxes**



**TO LEARN HOW YOU OR YOUR BUSINESS, SCHOOL,  
FAITH OR COMMUNITY GROUP CAN HELP**

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Email: [vivian.yao@montgomerycountymd.gov](mailto:vivian.yao@montgomerycountymd.gov)**



Linkages to Learning, a member of the Montgomery County Volunteer Center's Holiday Giving Coalition, delivers school-based health, mental health, social and educational support services to children and families in 23 MCPS schools.

*Thank You!*





Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive  
Montgomery County, Maryland

Linkages to Learning  
401 Fleet Street, 1st fl.  
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Phone: 240.777.1731

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov)

Alternative formats  
available upon request



## Summit Hall Students Dancers Celebrate Diversity



This October, the international dance group from Summit Hall ES entertained the public for Montgomery County's annual Diversity Celebration. The after-school program teaches students folk-dancing from the many countries represented at the school. Talented parents join a dance instructor to help students learn control, balance, rhythm and creative expression. The program receives funding from a federal 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant received by MCPS, which also supports Linkages' educational enrichment activities at several schools.

